The RTS,S Malaria Vaccine

The first vaccine recommended for use to prevent malaria in children. RTS,S/AS01 (RTS,S) is safe and effective and provides substantial public health impact. If implemented broadly, the vaccine could save tens of thousands of lives each year. Demand for the vaccine is high. Phased introductions will begin as early as late 2023.

The Malaria Vaccine Implementation Programme in Africa

Since 2019, delivered in 3 countries through national childhood immunization programmes as part of WHO-coordinated Malaria Vaccine Implementation Programme (MVIP). The 3 countries will continue and expand vaccination after pilot programme is complete at end of 2023.

What we know about the RTS,S malaria vaccine

IMPACT AND EVIDENCE
- Pilot introductions resulted in substantial reduction in deadly severe malaria – drop in child hospitalizations and reduction in child deaths
- Estimated 1 life saved for every 200 children vaccinated
- Phase 3 trial (2009-2014) of vaccine showed malaria cases dropped by over half in the first year after vaccination and a 40% reduction in malaria episodes over 4 years of follow up.¹
- Phase 3 trial (2017-2020) of vaccine provided just prior to peak malaria season in areas with highly seasonal malaria found vaccine efficacy similar to efficacy of Seasonal Malaria Chemoprevention (SMC), shown to prevent around 75% of malaria cases.²

GOOD SAFETY PROFILE
- Safety demonstrated after nearly 4 million vaccine doses given to more than 1.2 million children

FEASIBILITY
- High, equitable vaccine coverage achieved during pilot introductions showed high community demand, health worker acceptability, and capacity of countries to effectively deliver the vaccine.
- Vaccine introduction resulted in no reduction in insecticide-treated bednet (ITN) use, uptake of other childhood vaccines, or care-seeking behaviour for fever.

EQUITY
- Increased equity in access to malaria prevention tools: in pilot introductions, the vaccine reached more than two-thirds of children who are not sleeping under an ITN
- Layering the tools resulted in over 90% of children benefiting from at least one preventive intervention (ITN or the malaria vaccine)

COST-EFFECTIVE
- Estimated to be cost-effective in areas of moderate to high malaria transmission

The RTS,S vaccine is prequalified by WHO. Gavi is investing an initial nearly $USD 160 million for broader vaccine roll-out in endemic countries (2022-2025).

¹ www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lancet/PIIS0140-6736(15)60721-8.pdf

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